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SIPDIS

NEA FOR WELCH, CHENEY/DIBBLE, E.
NSC FOR ABRAMS/DANIN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [KWBG](#) [EG](#) [JO](#) [IS](#) [GOI](#) [EXTERNAL](#)

SUBJECT: MFA DEMANDS EGYPT DO MORE TO PREVENT SMUGGLING
ALONG GAZA BORDER

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Israeli MFA Director General Ron Prosor stressed to visiting NEA A/S Welch, DNSA Elliott Abrams, and the Ambassador June 17 that Egypt is doing "less than the minimum necessary" to stop smuggling along the Egyptian-Gaza border. Prosor floated the idea of allowing the Badr Brigade to deploy along the Philadelphi Corridor and secure the border from the Gaza side, an idea he said had been broached recently by former Jordanian Foreign Minister Hani Moulki. With suitable safeguards in place, such as requiring the brigade members, families to remain in Jordan, Prosor said he thought the idea had some merit. Prosor expressed concern that the June 16 EU statement that EU election monitors would have contact with Hamas candidates as required in the course of their duties could open the way for eventual recognition of a political arm of Hamas. He denied absolutely that any GOI officials, including COGAT officers coordinating municipal affairs in the occupied territories, knowingly have any contact with Hamas, saying that all contact is now routed through PA ministries to avoid any occurrence. The GOI will support Acting UNRWA Commissioner General Karen Abu Zayd for the top position. End Summary.

Egypt Must do More to Fight Smuggling

12. (C) Israeli MFA Director General Ron Prosor, Deputy Director General for North America Yoram Ben Ze'ev and senior staff stressed that Egypt must do more to prevent smuggling along the Gaza-Egyptian border in a June 17 meeting with Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams, NEA Assistant Secretary David Welch, and the Ambassador. Prosor forcefully maintained that the GOE is "doing less than the minimum required," while at the same time conditioning further Egyptian efforts on an agreement with Israel on establishing an Egyptian force along the border. The GOI insists that Egypt take what Prosor termed "irrevocable steps" to secure the border. A/S Welch agreed that Egypt needed to do more, adding that the U.S. continues to press the GOE directly on this issue.

Return of the Badr Brigade?

13. (C) Prosor floated possibly allowing the Badr Brigade to deploy along Gaza's Philadelphi Corridor and secure the border, an idea he said was broached to him in mid-June by former Jordanian Foreign Minister Hani Moulki and that he though had some merit. Brigade members, families would be required to stay in Jordan, sidestepping for the time being right of return issues. No promises would be made with regard to any return to the West Bank, but a successful deployment in Gaza would position the brigade well for the future. Finally, Prosor said that deploying the Brigade in Gaza would help strengthen PA Minister of Interior Nasir Yusif. Prosor said the MFA is checking to determine whether the idea is an official or private initiative and would present it to PM Sharon.

MFA Pushes Back Against EU Statement on Hamas

14. (C) Prosor also expressed GOI concern over the EU statement that EU election monitors will, in the context of monitoring the Palestinian Legislative Council election campaign, "have contacts with all candidates," including those of Hamas. A/S Welch reiterated that the U.S. policy prohibiting contact with Hamas remains unchanged, adding that the UK presidency in July might see a more cautious EU approach on this issue. Prosor responded that the GOI is worried that any EU contact with Hamas, even in the limited context of election monitoring, will pave the way for eventual recognition of a political arm of the organization and the subsequent death of the roadmap. "If we don't make a point now," Prosor said, "it will get away from us."

15. (C) Prosor and his team categorically denied that, after

a recent news story reported that COGAT officers had met with Hamas municipal officials in the course of their duties, any COGAT had any/any knowing contact with any Hamas-affiliated individuals. All GOI or COGAT contact with municipalities now goes exclusively through the relevant PA ministry, where the GOI could be relatively assured that they would not inadvertently come into contact with Hamas. Asked what conditions the GOI would impose should it find itself in a position where an issue was either so important or so urgent that contact absolutely must be made, Prosor insisted that the GOI had no criteria -- period. There would be no contact. Prosor suggested that the GOI and the U.S. might work together to develop joint criteria as a contingency.

Hizballah Provocations and KAZ for ComGen

16. (C) Prosor complained that Hizballah is trying to use a water dispute in the northern town of Ghajar to provoke a confrontation with Israel aimed, in Prosor's view, at shoring up Hizballah's position as defender of Lebanon among the Lebanese public. Prosor agreed with the Ambassador that general provocations of this type are not new, but maintained that the Syrian withdrawal provided a new context for them that bears watching. Ben Ze'ev remarked that, since Canadian Special Envoy to the Middle East Jill Sinclair declined to be considered for UNRWA Commissioner General, the GOI would support Acting ComGen Karen Abu Zayd for the top post.

17. (U) A/S Welch and DNSA Abrams cleared this message.

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KURTZER